NO. 7, BUNTER'S ROW; OR, HER BRIGHT IDEA.

BY MRS. G. S. REANEY.

"Come, now, I see you are not over-busy." p. 98.

SHE was a broken-hearted woman; nothing more nor less. Her married life had begun under happiest auspices, but had drifted, in a little over four years, into a dead failure.

"Surely she was not to blame for the strange turn Tom had taken! He had been a teetotaler when she married him, but for the last two years he had taken his glass—and she had hers to keep him company—and lately much more than his glass: he spent most of his evenings now from home, and alas! often returned towards midnight much the worse for drink. Oh dear! oh dear! how *was* a woman to keep up under these heavy burdens?"

Little Mrs. Brown grew pale as she contemplated her troubles; and her wonted energy expended itself in fretful complaining. She had neither spirits nor strength for her work, and the home was allowed to "go."

There had been a time when Martha Brown—well trained by her mother to be careful of details—thought a woman's character might be justly estimated by her window-blinds.

If *they* were spotlessly clean and in all respects in good condition, she might be taken as a careful manager, clean and thorough. If on the contrary the window-blinds were dingy, with here and there "creepy little holes," the fact spoke ill of the housewife, etc., etc.

But Martha Brown would have thought it cruel to-day had anyone judged *her* by her blinds, for she had no heart to attend to them. Of course they came down from time to time, but all order and regularity had long since ceased to exist about them. She changed them when their lack of cleanliness became a positive "eye-sore," seldom before; and as to the plants which had once been her pride and Tom's admiration, they often went for days without water, and pined and drooped and died long before their time, sharing in the general suffering which had come to the home when its mistress lost heart, and gave herself up to the luxury of repining.

Martha's home was No. 7 of a long row of houses. She remembered, when Tom brought her there as a young bride, saying how glad she was it was "No. 7," as seven was the Bible number of blessing—so many things in the Bible were counted out in sevens. Then she was glad that the number of their pew in church—for Tom took two sittings, and was at that time most regular in going—had a seven in it, No. 27, third from the top, to the left going in.

To-day Martha would have been just as happy—or miserable?—if eight had happened to be the number on the door instead of seven; and as to the pew in church—why, Tom never went now, and she seldom found the heart to go!

This was just where Mrs. Martha Brown was when Miss Octavia Burgess, but recently come to the neighbourhood, had assigned to her, as her portion of parish work, "Bunter's Row"—homes for the most part, the Rector explained to her, occupied by honest and industrious families in some way or other connected with the factory which she had to pass on the right after crossing the river bridge, on her way from the centre of the town.

Miss Octavia Burgess was a character in herself. She had grown up with several brothers; this gave her a certain severity of manners (some people, before they knew her, called it roughness), which made everyone who came in contact with her stand at first a little in awe. But beneath this severity there was the warmest of warm hearts; a heart so sensitive to the touch of sorrow that tears were seemingly always ready in reserve to weep over *little* slights and *little* wrongs and *little* sufferings, which others would pass as unworthy of notice. Miss Octavia Burgess had an unlimited wealth of sympathy in her possession, hence her powers of friendliness were unbounded. Only once let her make her power *felt*, and she awoke in hearts she sought to comfort a depth of grateful affection, which kept them loyal to her ever after.

The first time Miss Burgess called at No. 7, Bunter's Row, Mrs. Brown was busy at the wash-tub.

"Nay, I'll not come in," she said, brightly, as Martha begged her to "step inside." "You see I'm a woman myself, and when I'm particularly busy about anything, I have no pleasure in being interrupted by callers!" Which remark put Martha Brown at her ease immediately.

"I'm a bit late this week with my washing," she said, in a tone of apology; "I mostly get it done on Tuesdays, but somehow I did not feel inclined to settle to it before to-day," and she laughed a little sadly.

"Ah," said Miss Burgess, briskly, "now isn't that like a child who will play with inclination and turn its back on duty? I dare say if you confessed the whole truth, you did not *enjoy* the delay; but there, I cannot help you, so I will not hinder. Now tell me when I *may* come to see you again. Which is your best day for visitors?"

"Friday afternoon, I think," said Martha Brown, hastily. She spoke almost without thought, for really all days were alike to her, excepting the day when the washing was about.

"Then good-bye until to-morrow," said Miss Burgess, extending her hand, and she was off the next moment, not straight into the next-door neighbour's. No! that was not Miss Burgess' system of visiting. She always felt how much she would dislike periodical calls from people who came from her neighbour on the right and who went straight to her neighbour on the left when quitting her own house. The thought savoured of gossip, and the very echo of that word was honest pain to Miss Burgess' ear. *Her* plan of visiting made her miss at least ten doors after leaving No. 7 before she knocked again—a fact Martha Brown was careful to note, and she liked the lady all the better for it.

Martha Brown scarcely expected her visitor the next day, which proved to be showery. She had had a long, miserable morning, fretting over her troubles, a fact which partly accounted for her snappishness with Tom at dinner-time; and as the afternoon wore on she felt even more depressed than usual when Miss Burgess arrived, coming in between the showers like a little bit of sunshine.

"Come, now, I see you are not over-busy," said Miss Burgess, putting down her waterproof and umbrella, and seating herself in the chair Mrs. Brown placed for her out of a draught.

Martha smiled wearily. Then she chatted away, at first only answering questions, but within an incredibly short time feeling so much at home with her visitor that she did what she never remembered doing to anyone else; she just poured out her heart troubles without reserve.

"You see," she said, "I dare not let my poor old mother know my wretchedness. It would break her heart; I know it would. I write to her pretty regularly, and I always try to put the bright side upwards; but oh! how she would grieve. And you know it is not as if I did not know the help and comfort of prayer. Why, I've spent hours upon my knees. I thought my senses were going awhile ago. It came so hard upon me, Tom's selfishness, when I was lying ill—the best part of the day quite by myself, and he with no care to stay at home of evenings. He just looks in as he comes from the factory, to leave his tools, maybe, and get his tea hurriedly; then off he goes, and I see no more of him until midnight. And oh! but God knows how I have tried to keep him as loving and thoughtful as he was when we were first married. I don't think *my* love is one whit the less. I'm sure I'd be willing to die for him any day—but it's just the public-house and the companions he picks up there that come between us. I've lost all heart in hoping to have things otherwise. I expect I'll just have to go to my grave sorrowing, like many a wife has done before me; and maybe he'll try to make amends by putting up a tombstone, calling me his beloved wife and so forth, as if I should be lying in the grave at all if it had been that I was his *beloved* wife ——"

"Stop a bit, Mrs. Brown," said Miss Burgess, and her eyes were twinkling, "do not hurry on so fast; you are not in your grave yet, you know, and my belief is there is a very happy life in store for you before you even take the turn gravewards! I've got a bright idea."

Martha looked up inquiringly.

"I do not doubt the sincerity of your Christian faith, but—now don't be hurt—some of your chairs and window-

blinds, to my way of thinking, do not seem as if they were in the habit of saying 'Amen' to your prayers."

Martha Brown's look was one of earnest but amused curiosity.

"Ah!" continued Miss Burgess, "I see it wants a little explanation. Well, this is what I mean: I believe very much that our surroundings enforce or annul our prayers. To make your prayers all that I can conceive possible in the way of sincerity your chairs must glisten with polish, your window-blinds be spotless in cleanliness, your hearth well swept, and this kitchen floor so well scrubbed that to glance at it would suggest loving labour and unwearied effort to make it look its very, very best!"

Martha's look of amused curiosity grew into one of solemn thought; Miss Burgess' idea was so new to her; but it caught her fancy, nay more, went straight home to her heart.

"I did not always neglect my home as I'm afraid I have done lately," she said, in tones of apology, "but oh! I have so lost heart!"

"Our heartless prayers are bound to fail in claiming blessings," said Miss Burgess gravely.

"Heartless prayers ——" said Martha, and her cheeks flushed.

"You own them to have been heartless," said Miss Burgess in her gentlest tones. "Now supposing you had held my views about it, and had tested the sincerity of your own prayers by your effort to keep things at their best; supposing, instead of losing heart, you had just gone on, courageous and brave, sure that with God all things are possible, and determined (because believing in Him) to prove your love and willingness to suffer by keeping heart ——"

Martha Brown was weeping.

"Please forgive me," said Miss Burgess, rising to go. "I did not mean to hurt you unnecessarily. If in giving you a moment's pain I can help you to get back heart, I think the day will yet come when we may rejoice together. Good-bye. Do not come to the door. See; I had almost forgotten the flowers I had brought for you. I put them in my bag to keep them from being spoilt by the rain. Good-bye, again. I shall look in some time next week." And with a smile so sweet, so motherly that Martha's heart grew tender under it, Miss Burgess went away.

"And she is right—quite right," said Martha, as she stood in deep thought for a moment. "Yes; and there was more sound teaching in her words than if she had read a whole epistle of Paul through, or spent an hour upon her knees praying for me in my trouble. I'll take her advice, I will. Why, it's only four o'clock now; I can manage to tidy a bit before Tom comes in for his tea."

(To be continued.)

THE ART OF NURSING.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE,

Author of "Semi-detached," etc., etc.

IV.—Food and Medicine.

To those in health and sickness alike, food is medicine, and the sick person should be studied, and his diet carefully prepared and given to him. A great deal depends upon attention to what seem like trifling details, but upon these trifles much in reality hangs. Everything that you give the patient should be made to look as inviting as possible, and this can be done in the poorest as well as the richest home.

The food should be carefully prepared, and it must be remembered that, without being dainty, sick people often cannot fancy that which in health they ate with appetite.

Underdone vegetables, a custard that has curdled, or anything not fresh and good, should never be set before a sick person. Before you bring the tray in, see that everything is in order; and should you be obliged to taste any of the food or drink prepared for the patient to see that it is all right, be careful not to do so before him, and do not use the spoon intended for him. Make the meal look as tempting as you possibly can, and to this end see that everything is quite clean. Blurred glass, dull spoons and knives, and a tumbled, stained napkin are not calculated to invite the appetite of the patient.

Bright glass and spoons, knives without a stain on them, and everything spotless can always be had, and however coarse the linen may be, it can be clean.

Do not fill the cup or glass too full. To give a cup to a patient with what the French call a *bain de pied*, that is, the liquid spilt in the saucer, is very untidy and dirty. The dripping on night-dress, sheet or pillow is annoying, and for the weak or tired hand to have to protect these by carrying the saucer as well is an additional worry when, perhaps, even "the grasshopper is a burden." You should always have small things for the tray, as the food, etc., looks nicer in them, and they are not as heavy as large ones. Small glass salt-cellars can be purchased for a few pence, and tiny plates, a little cream-jug and sugar-basin, and everything on a small scale adds much to the appearance of the tray, and gives each thing more room. Choose pretty china and glass. Put a tiny spray of parsley on the butter and a few leaves round any fruit; even a flower laid on the tray makes it look nice and bright.

In cases of long illness it is much better to have a bed-table, the flap of which can be swung across the bed. Another plan is to have a small bed-table made of a piece of board on four short legs, the front of the board being slightly curved inwards, and a narrow rim running round three sides of it to prevent anything falling off. These latter arrangements prevent the need of a tray, as the napkin can be placed upon them.

With regard to giving food to the patient it is best to follow Miss Nightingale's advice, "the patient should never be asked beforehand what he will take." Prepare what has been ordered, or what you think he will fancy, bring it to him, and then see if he will take it. The chances often are that if you consult him as to whether he will take it or not, that he will refuse. Always put before the patient about as much as you think he is likely to take, less rather than more, for frequently the sight of a large quantity will take away his appetite.

Try and get as much variety as possible, and the rule of not consulting the patient beforehand does not, of course, apply in convalescence, for then he likes to hear very often what he is to have, and takes an interest in it. All food

should be cooked away from the sick-room, and no smell should be allowed to reach the patient. Punctuality is a very great matter, and it should be strictly observed in giving food and medicines.

If the patient does not finish what you have put before him do not leave it by his bedside on the chance of his taking it later. Take it out of the room, and do not keep any food in the sick-room.

When the patient is going to have food or drink you should prop him up, and put something round him, or else he will catch cold from having his shoulders exposed; and place a napkin under his chin and over the sheet. This should always be done when medicine has to be taken.

If the patient is able to take solid food he will not need it more than every three or four hours, but if the nourishment is liquid, then it has to be given more frequently, two hours never elapsing without some of it being given. In some cases you may be directed to feed the invalid every half hour.

You should always ask the doctor whether, if the patient be asleep, you are to wake him for food or medicine. In many cases it is wrong to wake a person to take nourishment, but there are other occasions when the food may be of more consequence than the sleep.

If the patient cannot sit up to take his food you must administer it with a feeding-cup. It is a good plan in this case to have two feeding-cups, one for nourishment, and the other for medicine. A bent glass tube is also a good thing to have, and let the patient use, as often he will take a little fluid through it when he refuses the feeding-cup.

In many fevers, and in severe cases of illness, the patient requires food during the night. It is a good plan in general cases to give some light nourishment just before the sick person settles down to sleep, as it helps to support him through the night. In the very early morning, at daybreak, food should be given, as at this time the temperature is at its lowest, and the patient's strength is at its worst. You can easily heat food on a spirit lamp, and if you possibly can, do this in another room, or on the landing, if you have a table placed there containing what you are likely to require.

In great weakness, and often in cases of fever, the tongue is foul and dry, and the mouth and teeth are coated with a deposit called *sordes*, and this really is waste material from the mucous membrane of the mouth, and the result, so medical books tell us, of disordered secretion. Clean this away should it exist. Miss Florence Lees says that the method taught her in Paris, at the Hotel Dieu, was this—"To cleanse the teeth and gums cut a small slice of lemon and rub it gently, but firmly, over the teeth, tongue and lips. Then with a little pure water and a charpie brush, rapidly wash over the same. The charpie brushes were made by tying a small bunch of charpie (lint) to a piece of stick." The tongue and lips of a fever patient should be frequently moistened with plain water or some acid solution—lime juice being an excellent one to use.

Patients who are half delirious, or in a state of coma, should be roused before any attempt is made to give them food. Often when you touch the lips with the spoon the lips open and the food is swallowed. Do not give a second spoonful until you are sure the first has been swallowed.

With regard to stimulants, only those should be given which are ordered by the doctor, and the exact quantity he prescribes should be carefully measured when given. Always give the stimulant at the time the doctor has ordered it to be taken, and see that it is of the very best. Never guess the quantity, but measure it carefully.

Concerning medicines there are several things to be borne in mind. One is never give a dose without first looking carefully at the bottle to see that it is the right one, and without exception measure the prescribed quantity in a graduated glass.

The glass from which the patient takes the medicine should be kept perfectly clean, as a dirty glass does not make medicine pleasanter to take.

In giving cod-liver or castor oil, if you have another medicine to give as well, keep separate glasses for each. Both the above named oils are best given in coffee or hot milk; in the latter the taste is well disguised. To take the taste of any nasty medicine away, nothing answers so well as for the patient to chew some bread, and then spit it out. Rinsing the mouth out with water is not nearly so effectual. If you have to give a medicine that smells strongly, keep a special glass for the purpose.

Arsenic should always be given after food.

Quinine is best taken on an empty stomach.

Iron is best taken after food.

In taking medicines that taste badly, much annoyance can be avoided by not letting the lips touch them. This can be done by pouring the contents down the throat, and not letting the lips touch the contents of the glass or spoon.

Many people's teeth suffer much injury from iron or other discolouring medicines, and this can be easily avoided by taking the medicines through a glass tube, which can be purchased for a few pence at any chemist's, and also by washing out the mouth each time after taking the medicines, and thoroughly cleaning the teeth night and morning.

In case some readers may not be familiar with medical terms denoting weights and measures, I give the following table:—

gr.*i.* (one grain).
℈*i.* (one scruple) = 20 grains.
ʒ*i.* (one drachm) = 60 grains.
ʒ*ss.* (half ounce) = ʒiv. (4 drachms).
℥*i.* (one ounce) = 8 drachms.
℔.*i.* (one pound) = 16 ounces.
♏*i.* (one minim).
♏ʒ*i.* (one fluid drachm) = 60 minims.

One drachm is equivalent to one teaspoonful. Two drachms are equivalent to a dessertspoonful. Half-an-ounce is equivalent to a tablespoonful.

If drops are ordered, you should not trust to dropping them yourself from a bottle, but you should use a measure. With many medicine glasses is also sold a tiny glass called a minim measure.

In giving effervescing medicines choose a large tumbler, mix the acid first, and then add the alkaline part.

If the patient has to take pills, and finds, as so many do, much difficulty in swallowing them, put them into a small piece of bread and then they can be swallowed down with a little milk or water. Powders may be taken between thin pieces of bread. The common grey powder is usually best given in milk, water or gruel.

In giving a narcotic, let it be given the very last thing; and if you want any conversation with the patient, get it all over before you give him the draught.

In giving medicines to children it is far better to make them understand that they must take what is given them. To tell them that it will not taste nasty is untrue, if the medicine be of an unpleasant taste, and your doing so only increases your difficulty in giving them further doses, as of course they discover the deception at once.

"A soporific and a stimulant." p. 102.

THE CULTURE OF GIRLS.

When the time has arrived for leaving school, a great crisis comes in the life of a girl. With her intellect perhaps a little wearied from the strain of modern education, she has reached the point when a slight influence either way will determine whether she is to be an intelligent being, going on improving, and growing in mental stature and ripeness of judgment, or a mere doll, with no thought beyond dressing and amusing herself.

George Eliot, in "The Mill on the Floss," when depicting the workings of Maggie Tulliver's mind, gives us a true picture of the inmost feelings of many a girl at this age, and the impossibility of her life being wholly absorbed in the mechanical routine of her home. How "the poor child with her soul's hunger" filled her vacant hours with the study of Latin, geometry, and the form of the syllogism, and felt as if she "had set out towards the promised land alone, and found it a thirsty, trackless, and uncertain journey."

One can imagine what a different ending might have come to such a life if she had had someone to guide and watch over her mental growth, and direct her through the tangled pathway of her intellectual maze; someone to help her, to train her soul for its inevitable struggles, to enable her to enlarge her mind, and to take clear views of life, while keeping her imagination in check, and hindering her impulsive nature from seeing in immoderate self-humiliation and renunciation the solution of the problem of life.

Nearly all girls pass through such a phase of feeling when they are leaving childish things behind them, and according to their dispositions and surroundings, often fly to opposite errors. Some become youthful stoics, who for a time think all pleasure a sin, and are terribly in earnest in whatever hobby or work they engage in; but more still devote themselves entirely to pleasure, as if the world held no duties for them.

Novel-reading is their principal refuge, often indulged in until it spoils them for more solid reading. It is both a soporific and a stimulant. If there is anything irksome to them in their surroundings, the spell of fiction soothes them until they forget it and dream away many hours; and yet it supplies them with a mental excitement that causes them to spend most of the day acting, often unconsciously, the part of their favourite heroine.

Works of fiction have become a great power. Those who write them assume the responsibility of taking in their hands the natures of the youth of their country, to mould, for good or evil, at the most plastic time of life.

Novels are no longer simple tales, but great works of art, displaying the inner workings of the spirit and character, and requiring in their authors a profound knowledge of human nature, as well as talent—if not genius—of a very high order. They have been in many cases a power in the State, producing reformation in the workhouses, the cheap boarding-schools, the lunatic asylums; even the Chancery Court has not been sacred from their profane touch.

Can we wonder, therefore, at the influence exerted by them over young minds, or ought we to consider a girl weak, mentally or morally, because she is fascinated by the pictures of life they open up before her? When one of the greatest men in the State, and another in the Church, have thought it not beneath them to write criticisms on works of fiction, surely we may be allowed to think highly of them. Carlyle also, who does not impress one as a likely person to indulge in novel-reading, would often of an evening ask Dickens to give him "some more of that Pip nonsense;" and when he was suffering from that great misfortune—the magnitude of which only an author can appreciate—the accidental destruction of his MSS., he solaced himself with a course of Marryat's novels.

Novels fill an important rôle, therefore, when used as a rest after active work, for the wearied in brain or body, or as a mild stimulant to the torpid faculties; but if they are allowed to constitute the sole mental food for the young, we shall get stunted intellects and perverted minds.

The obstacles that the conventions of the world had placed in the way of women's mental development in the past, have nearly all been removed. This century has seen many changes of opinion. Old conditions have passed away, new ideas have come in their place; and especially has this been so in the status and position of women. The modern spirit that has been "altering long fixed habits, undermining venerable institutions, even modifying national character," has seized upon the gentler sex also, and given rise to an advancing belief amongst women, growing stronger every year, that they as well as men have individual careers worth fostering and developing; that though the care of their households may be their chief duty, yet *all* their life and intelligence should not be bounded by the kitchen and the nursery.

Be this as it may, it is no longer considered that the less they know the better for them, or that they make any worse wives or mothers because of more systematic education. The obvious truth is now generally acknowledged that the higher the position women gain in the scale of intelligence, the more competent will they be to guide their households aright; and that the children of both sexes will not only inherit nobler qualities from mothers thus educated, but will be more ably guided during childhood, and will more willingly listen to their counsel in the years to come. We see in the biographies of all great men what a factor in their lives a mother's influence has been; and the vast power of the sex may be traced in the history of nations, where we are shown that when the women were frivolous, weak, or wicked, the decadency of the nation had begun.

The knowledge of this ought to make women careful that they put their growing freedom to the best uses, that their liberty does not become license, and that they remember that their increasing power brings with it an enlarged responsibility. Their influence is widening very rapidly, and if it is to be a purifying and stimulating one in the future, as well as the calming, soothing, restraining one it has been in the past, they must be preparing themselves for their career by using their knowledge—

"Now no more a fountain seal'd"—

as a means to lift up their natures towards that ideal life which is "none other than man's normal life, as we shall one day know it," and in this fountain

> "Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
> The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite,
> And slander, die."

The training which girls receive during school life is growing more and more arduous, and care will have to be taken that it is not too much so for their physical strength. No amount of intellectual power will compensate for impoverished health; besides that the more perfect the human machinery is, the faculties are the more likely to be clearer, and the judgment unwarped.

And while cultivating the intellect and developing the physical strength of girls, habits of courtesy need to be also strongly inculcated, so that these may not be superficial, but grow with their growth, and become part of their nature, and that the good "breeding" to which our old writers so often allude may not be wanting.

But it is especially when girls leave school that we would urge that no opportunity should be lost of stimulating them to further intellectual work.

Often they would very willingly continue their studies, but do not know how to proceed. They labour under great difficulties and grow discouraged. They need direction, both as to what to read and how. Books are within the reach of all nowadays, but their very multiplicity makes it difficult for the young to choose the proper authorities on any particular subject, and desultory, purposeless reading soon becomes wearisome and unsatisfactory.

For a number of years there has been, in America, an attempt made to supply a stimulus to the girls by instituting societies amongst them, under various names, the members of which are bound to read a certain amount of solid literature every day; and about ten years ago the world-renowned "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle" was begun. The success of this society has been marvellous. It has now upwards of one hundred thousand members.

Our transatlantic friends are not clogged with the trammels of old traditions as we are, and they can attempt new ventures much more easily; but the new departure in university extension has shown what England also can do in this way. The first summer meeting held in Oxford proved a remarkable success, and being followed by the further schemes of Reading Circles and Students' Association, there will be now no lack of guidance for most of those wishing improvement or intellectual pleasure to brighten their lives.

But there are other girls needing help of this kind to whom either the Oxford or Chautauqua course are impossibilities, for diverse reasons; and to them we would recommend a very simple reading circle that has been tried in some districts with great success.

Without any elaborate organisation, a few girls meet together about once a fortnight for the purpose of reading and commenting on some particular book. These meetings are found to succeed best when there are one or more matrons amongst the members, who can intelligently control them, keep the members prompt to the hour, encourage the diffident, and restrain any who might otherwise encroach on the time or patience of the rest. By meeting in each other's houses, and each matron acting as president in her own home, more originality is gained, the interest is heightened, and there is greater likelihood of any difficulties arising in the reading being solved.

While the president or presidents ought, if possible, to be ladies of wide general information, yet the girls understand that their meetings are not intended for a class with a teacher, but to mutually help each other, to bring out the real significance of passages, the explanation of classical allusions, the pronunciation or peculiar meaning of words, and that each one must take an intelligent part.

"As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the face of a man his friend," and the associating with others in any one of the schemes we have mentioned would stimulate and help all the members, would deprive the trashy literature of the day of much of its influence, and would rouse up many to better things who are leading frivolous, self-indulgent lives. The intellectual culture of many homes would be promoted, and English girls would gain the personal originality and power of adaptation which make their American sisters so fascinating. Even the simplest of these methods, while occupying very little time, would give them some plan of study, and by furnishing them with higher ideals and healthy guidance, would strengthen the moral principles and raise the tone of society throughout the country.

A rational culture would then take the place of the mechanical, and the girls might read the novel in their leisure, to feed their imaginations, while not neglecting other and higher literature, to enlarge their minds, keep a proper balance in their faculties, and fit them for the large share of the world's work which is now put into their hands, besides the empire belonging to them as wives and mothers.

E. FAIRBAIRN.

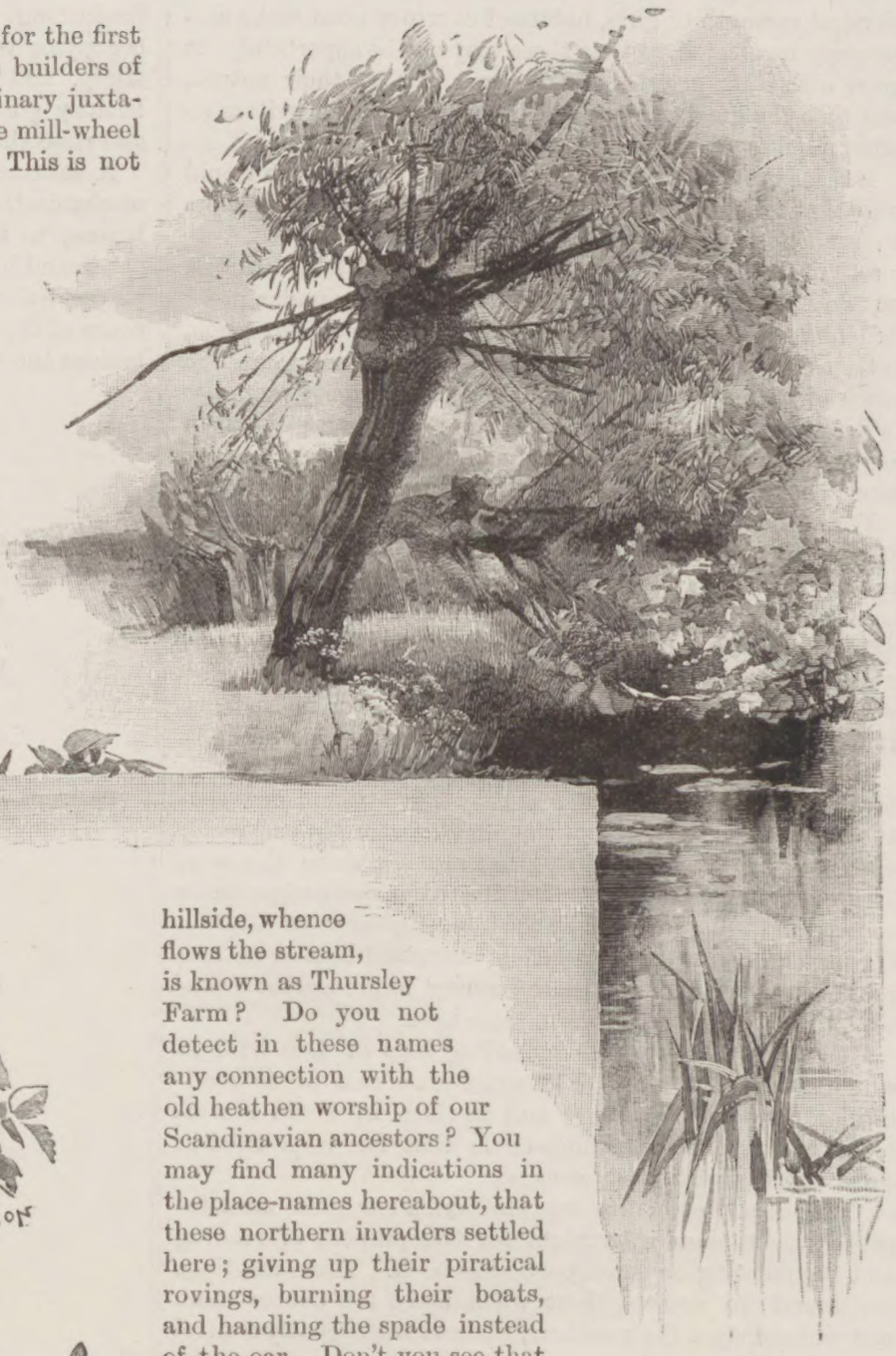
THE OLD HOME.

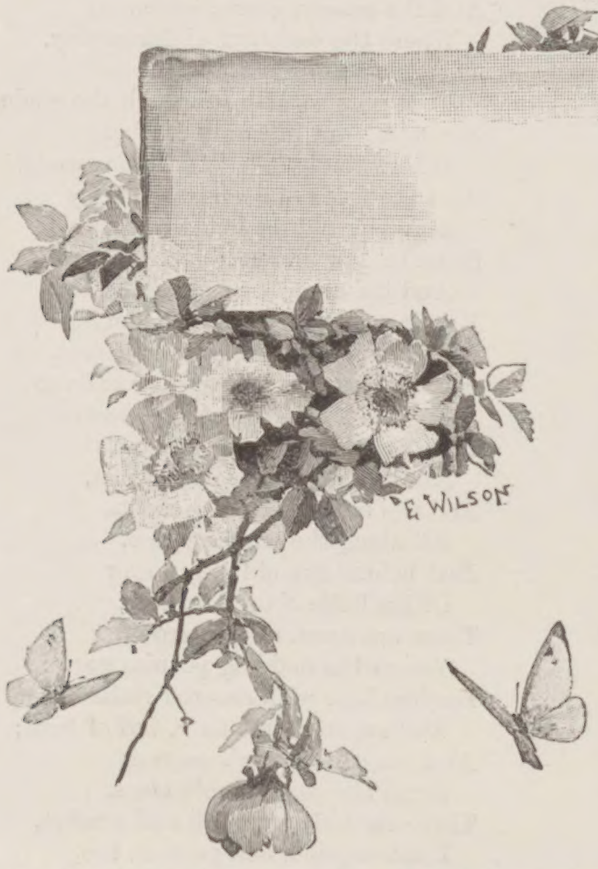
I REMEMBER, oh! so plainly,
Through the misty long ago,
Meadows stretching to the streamlet
Where the nodding alders grow.
I can smell the purple clover,
See the speedwell by the way,
And the breezy, gorsey common
Where the sunburnt children play.
There's a river full of fishes,
That goes babbling through the glade,
Spreading out in sunny reaches
Where the long-legged herons wade.
And the fields of beans and barley
Standing out against the skies,
Seem to bow and greet the insects
And the countless butterflies.
Bright-eyed robins sweetly singing
From the quivering aspen leaves,
Answer back the twittering swallows
From the hanging cottage eaves.
I can see the drooping harebells
And the fields of waving grain,
And the buttercups and daisies
All along the winding lane.
Just behind the old grey tower
Of the little church I know,
There are roses, and a garden
Where the nodding peonies grow;
Borders blue with scented violets,
And sweet thyme beds, full of bees;
And the cuckoo cuckoos ever
From the mossy apple trees.
There are larkspurs, tall and sombre,
London-pride, and pansies, too,
And o'er all is breathed the fragrance
Of red marjoram and rue.
And the thrushes from the bushes,
And the blackbirds on the spray
Sing of love, and peace, and quiet,
And of summer all the day.
Now I very often wonder
If the flowers are still as sweet;
If the fields are still as golden
With the waving, rustling wheat;
If the birds are still as blithesome,
And the streamlet still as pure,
As it was when we were children
In the happy days of yore.

W. M. E. F.

OUR MILL.

As you walk along the stream towards the mill for the first time, you wonder what could have induced the builders of church and mill to place them in such extraordinary juxtaposition; for the stream of water that turns the mill-wheel appears to come from under the church-tower. This is not really so, as you discover when you reach the road, and are able to look down on the other side and see the water, crystal-clear, flowing rapidly along a stone channel through the churchyard. And then the nice question arises in your mind, "which was here first—church or mill?" Perhaps the mill, and the original miller may have prospered so well that he desired to put his thanks to God into a shape that all men might see. And so he built this church beside the mill, that men who came to have their corn ground to make the bread that perisheth might also receive the Bread of Life—God's holy Word; that the rushing and gushing of the earthly streams might remind them of the Living Water.





Maybe the church was there first, after all, and the ancient clergy may have made this mill to grind the corn in which their tithe was paid. Who knows? I confess that the subject often occupies my thoughts when I walk beside the stream or the mill-pond; although no good would accrue to anyone could the matter be definitely settled. This much I do know: the mill has been in the occupation of Thorburns for hundreds of years, and if you look at the ordnance survey map of these parts you will find the mill-stream marked as the Thor-burn.

What then? Well, folks here do say that the stream has taken the name of the millers; but that is putting the boot on the wrong foot, and is sheer nonsense. Is not the stream known for several miles each way as the Thorburn? And do you regard it as a mere coincidence that the farm on the hillside, whence flows the stream, is known as Thursley Farm? Do you not detect in these names any connection with the old heathen worship of our Scandinavian ancestors? You may find many indications in the place-names hereabout, that these northern invaders settled here; giving up their piratical rovings, burning their boats, and handling the spade instead of the oar. Don't you see that where the farm now stands was once probably set apart for the worship of Thunor or Thor—Thor's lea or meadow? And what more natural than that the stream, which has its source in that sacred upland, should be sacred too, and set apart as Thor's burn or brook.

Then, is it not likely that, in course of time, the name of the stream became attached to the miller, to distinguish him, perhaps, from the man who kept the mill in the valley over the hill?

But let us leave these abstruse questions to the philologist and the antiquarian, who can rack their brains over such matters, whilst we sit by the side of the mill-pond and enjoy the blue sky, the song of birds, and the sweet sights and scents of the wild flowers round about us. Ah, a wonderful place is this mill-pond with its sandy bottom, through which we can see the springs breaking forth to help the waters of the Thorburn that flow in just above. As I lie quietly stretched upon the bank and gaze through the water, it always seems to me that they are an exact aquatic model, on a very small scale, of the great volcanoes or fire-fountains. Instead of the fiery stream of molten mineral falling and piling itself up as a hollow cone around, we have a jet of sand

and water spurting up and dropping the solid portion, grain by grain, to form a similar but more depressed cone.

The water-wheel itself is bright green with mossy growths, and as it slowly revolves it casts off a constant coruscation of liquid diamonds, that splash against the walls and the vegetation thereon; until from time to time the drops commingle and run off the long, green straps of harts-tongue that grow from the chinks of masonry, and drip down upon the broad fronds of osmunda below.

The banks of the mill pond are tunnelled by water-voles; and when all is quiet we may see one or more of these interesting creatures come timidly forth and champ the tender aquatic vegetation. The slightest movement on our part, and he plunges into the water, just there where the patch of bright turquoise forget-me-nots looks like a fallen piece of heaven's brightest blue. There is sweet-flag, too, on the margin, with yellow iris and arrow-head. There are cloudlike masses of soft, fragrant, foamy meadowsweet; tall, bending shafts of reed and sedge, in which are the cunningly-woven baskets of the warblers, who cheer us with their all but ceaseless songs.

Right in the middle of the pond a little islet has been formed by rush and reed and floating vegetation, until so thick a mass has formed that a pair of mute swans have appropriated it for a nesting-place, and have lately hatched out their fluffy cygnets. Half-way between the islet and the shore there floats another nest—that of the bald-headed coot—just lightly moored to the bottom by a water-weed. Gold lily-cups are anchored there likewise, and underneath the floating leaves aquatic beasts are lurking in the shadows. Flat-headed newts, all speckled black on orange underneath, with wavy serrate frills along their backs, wait almost hidden underneath these leaves. Fine fish leap upward from the watery depths at gnats and caddis-flies that flit above. These fish are swarming in the central depths, in spite of onslaughts from ducks and swans; and Miller Thorburn's punt is there for friends who care to have a few hours' practice in the gentle craft. Just mention to him that thou art a friend of mine—the punt is at your service. J. W.

THE MISSES BRENTHAM.

BY P. A. BLYTH,

Author of "Paul Porter and His Brothers," "Broken Reeds," etc.

CHAPTER I.

VAGUE PROSPECTS.

"If I understand you aright, then, Charles, you mean to marry for money?"

Dr. Bowtell as he spoke slightly raised himself in the easy chair in which he had been lounging in luxurious fashion, and looked fixedly in the face of the young man standing opposite to him. The remark uttered by some people might have sounded cynical and unpleasant, but there was nothing either cynical or unpleasant in Dr. Bowtell's genial, intelligent face; only he was not one to be deceived by vague ideas or hazy expressions—he had a habit of putting things in their right places, and calling them by their right names. Yet his words seemed to startle the person to whom they were addressed.

He was a young man of about thirty years of age, a distant cousin of Dr. Bowtell, though there was little outward similarity to denote relationship. He had not his cousin's frank, pleasant expression; instead, though ten years his junior, time had already left emphatic touches, and here and there on his face a deeply-indented line or furrow suggested that whatever life might have been to others it had not gone altogether on oiled wheels for him. As he himself pathetically stated, Charles Stanley was not one of fortune's favourites; indeed, that fickle dame had been, he considered in his own mind, particularly freakish with him. In plain terms, Charles Stanley had been brought up in easy, affluent circumstances, and when the time arrived that work was demanded of him rather than play, he developed only a decided taste for expensive habits and indulgences, which plunged him into a series of embarrassments and difficulties, to escape from which he came suddenly to the conclusion that old England was already too full, and arrived at the decision to go abroad. He set out with the laudable intention of making his fortune on a foreign shore, but like many an unwise aspirant in the same direction, he signally failed, and after eight years' experience returned home, his pecuniary affairs by no means improved, and his fortune no nearer being made than it had been before his departure.

An outline of his life abroad, with some of the vicissitudes that had attended his lot, he had been detailing to Dr. Bowtell, concluding with but visionary prospects for his future life, the only bright spots in his horizon being apparently some unexpected legacy or a brilliant matrimonial alliance; and this last idea, vague though his plans and projects were, seemed expressed with so distinct an emphasis as to elicit from Dr. Bowtell the quiet remark:

"If I understand you aright, then, Charles, you mean to marry for money?"

Charles Stanley winced at the plain, unvarnished statement; the thing thus rendered sounded ugly and repulsive, and clashed against his refined tastes and feelings. He had only been favouring his cousin with one of those vague, aimless, melancholy dissertations in which men of disappointed hopes and purposes are supposed to be privileged to indulge; he had meant nothing further than a mere display of reckless bravado, and that his cousin out of it all had found some definite project and expressed it in unpolished terms, annoyed and disgusted him.

"No; I fancy I am about the last one likely to do that," he said, and he had thorough confidence in his honourable intentions generally, as he spoke. But besides this hasty negative, he felt he could not further resent his cousin's speech. If any man had a right to speak on these matters, Dr. Bowtell had. He had met the lady who was his wife, loved her, courted her, married her, and whether she was princess or beggar had never for a moment weighed in his consideration. In reality he had married a lady in easy circumstances, similar to his own, but with them both there was so much genuine affection that pecuniary matters came but little into their calculations. Dr. Bowtell lived in no glass house in this respect, and Charles Stanley could not resent his remark; still, as his cousin sat leaning back again in his lounge chair, his feet stretched out before the warm, blazing fire, enjoying his half hour of leisure with a look of complacent happiness upon his face, something in the sight proved irritating to Charles Stanley in his less favoured position. Even the little poodle dog sitting on the rug, with its beady black eyes fixed in canine fashion steadily upon the dancing, glowing flames, seemed full of this complacency of enjoyment. If he might not retaliate on the master, that poodle dog had certainly no right to sit thus basking in the fulness of peace and contentment. He himself was homeless, an outsider, but even the poodle was favoured and prosperous. He did not mean to be unjustly vindictive, it seemed only an active exponent of his thoughts, but the next moment his foot made a hasty movement, which sent the prosperous poodle yelping for protection under its master's chair. The yelping continuing, Dr. Bowtell stooped down and lifted the dog on to his knee.

"It is a good thing Alice is not in the room, or you would get into trouble."

"I didn't know it was Mrs. Bowtell's dog, and I didn't mean to hurt the creature."

Charles Stanley spoke apologetically; he was already half ashamed of his momentary petulance.

"Oh, I don't think she is hurt, but Fan is not used to kicks and cuffs, are you, Fan?"

The dog for reply turned to her master a quick, comprehensive glance, and under the caressing touch of his hand the yelping ceased, though from beneath her shaggy locks she kept a furtive eye on the inhuman disturber of her peace.

"Are you going to Robinson's to-night?" asked the doctor, after a few minutes' silence.

"Yes, I suppose I must. I promised to go."

"Oh, go by all means. It will cheer you up. I don't mean there will be anything very gay or grand, but the Robinsons know how to make people spend a pleasant evening. I wish we could go with you, but an old friend having written to say he would dine with us to-night, we did not like to put him off. But the Robinsons are not strangers to you."

"No; I knew them well before I went abroad."

Just then the door opened, and Mrs. Bowtell entered. Her face, like her husband's, was bright and genial; if not possessing positive beauty, it was cheerful and pleasant to

look upon. She came softly to the back of her husband's chair, and laid one hand on his shoulder.

"What were you discussing?" she said.

Mrs. Bowtell knew she asked the question safely. Her husband had no discussions secret from her.

"I was persuading Charles to go to Robinson's to-night."

"Oh, yes; of course you must go, Mr. Stanley. You will have an enjoyable evening, and meet some nice people."

Dr. Bowtell glanced up into his wife's face.

"Who knows, dear? he may meet his fate."

Mrs. Bowtell smiled back into her husband's eyes. At some such social gathering they had met each other for the first time.

"Let me see," she said, "whom will he be likely to meet?" Then her face gathering sudden illumination from the thought—"Why, George, Miss Brentham will be there."

"Yes, and Miss Brentham is an heiress, Charles!"

Charles Stanley fancied he detected covert meaning in the remark. Assuming a cynical tone, he replied—

"Then I am sure she will be quite out of my line."

"Oh, you don't know Miss Brentham," interposed Mrs. Bowtell. "She is a great favourite of mine, I assure you, and, as George says, she is an heiress, really and truly; isn't she, George?"

"Yes, Miss Brentham is no heiress in anticipation merely. Her money is in her own hands. Her father, you see, was a prosperous man, and made his fortune very rapidly, and when he died left his only child an orphan, with a very considerable income. Then her grandmother, with whom she resides, is supposed to be immensely rich, and Miss Brentham is looked upon as the person likely to inherit her wealth. So you see, as my wife says, Miss Brentham is really and truly an heiress. The only wonder to me is she has remained Miss Brentham so long."

Charles Stanley felt inclined to grow very cynical.

"Perhaps the lady's personal attractions are not equal to her possessions?"

Mrs. Bowtell answered promptly on her friend's behalf—

"There you are altogether wrong; but Miss Brentham is very fastidious, and gives decided negatives to all her suitors. But there, you must see her for yourself, and then you can judge. I don't say she is a great beauty. I do not consider her that, but there is something very sweet and attractive in both her face and manner. She has been a friend of mine for some years, and, I will say, I don't know anywhere a sweeter girl than Mary Brentham."

Charles Stanley laughed a bitter little laugh:

"Then I am sure so much perfection is quite beyond my reach."

Mrs. Bowtell laughed saucily.

"Oh, yes, she is a whole world too good for you, I believe. But there, I don't wish to discourage you, and if you win the good favour of Mary Brentham, you will be a proud man, and we shall all be proud of you."

"Now, Charles," said Dr. Bowtell, "have you all the recommendations you require?"

"Yes, I fancy so, and if I mean to face my chances this evening, I must be preparing for the event."

And bidding a short adieu to his cousin and Mrs. Bowtell, Charles Stanley leisurely quitted the room, leaving the married couple to their quiet domestic enjoyment.

CHAPTER II.

AN INTRODUCTION.

Charles Stanley had known the Robinsons before going abroad, but they had then been living in quite another neighbourhood. Therefore, with the exception of his host and hostess, he felt surrounded by strange faces, and once during the evening found himself standing alone in his friend's spacious, well-filled drawing-room. He was not left long to his solitary reflections. Mr. Robinson, coming up, laid his hand on his arm.

"What, alone?" he said. "I am afraid you have hardly been introduced properly to these people. Let me see. Oh, here is Miss Brentham. Miss Brentham, this is Mr. Stanley, a very old friend of mine."

Charles Stanley had not been aware of the presence so close to him. Turning, he saw a young lady about four or five and twenty. This, then, was the notable Miss Brentham, and the introduction had happened quite naturally and without any seeking on his part. The first introductory process over, he could not restrain a furtive glance at his companion. Mrs. Bowtell had said Miss Brentham was not a beauty. If this was Miss Brentham, she was correct. The term beauty could not certainly be exactly applied to her. She was tall, her figure straight and well-proportioned, not flexible enough for grace, but of very symmetrical outline. The firm, well-developed frame gave rather the idea of strength and physical power. Her glossy black hair was drawn back tightly from her forehead, the braids coiled closely at the back of her head were all in accordance with the general neatness and trimness of appearance. Her features were rather large and somewhat irregular, but her face was redeemed from plainness by a pair of dark, kindly brown eyes. Not eloquent eyes, nor beautiful, nor passionate, they varied but little in expression; yet just such a sensible face and just such kindly eyes as a child or sick person would instinctively trust or appeal to—a face which, if studied, would doubtless have denoted much moral worth and goodness, but not striking enough in itself to invite much observation.

Charles Stanley failed to discover the attractive sweetness of which Mrs. Bowtell had spoken. His fastidious taste led him to sum up the general appearance of the lady before him in the one word—commonplace. Still, it was Miss Brentham, the heiress actual and in anticipation; and, despite his previous assertions, he felt himself prompted to make the best of the situation.

Miss Brentham proved a very quiet companion; she spoke but little, and then on ordinary topics and in ordinary phrases. Still, if Miss Brentham did not possess brilliant conversational powers, she proved herself a ready and appreciative listener, and when the conversation turned upon foreign life and travel, she listened with vivid and evident interest. But in the midst of a narration of an incident that had occurred to him when abroad, Charles Stanley's thoughts were suddenly distracted by the presence of a second listener.

A lady had seated herself at a side-table close to him, and though apparently occupied with a sketch-book lying before her, was evidently giving her first attention to the story being related. She was about the same age as Miss Brentham, but there all similarity ceased. Her face betokened much refinement of character, and her soft, dark-grey eyes were very sweet in expression. It was the lifting of her eyes to his face, with their sudden look of intelligent interest, that had for a moment disturbed the thread of Charles Stanley's story. Yet there was in her face and whole appearance an unconscious blending of simplicity and dignity that caused him to give her an almost reverential admiration. A moment later her presence was requested at the other end of the room. Charles Stanley watched her as she moved away; simultaneously his story came to a sudden halt.

"Who is that lady?" he asked abruptly of his companion.

Miss Brentham followed the direction of his eyes.

"That lady? Oh, she is my cousin. But pray, Mr. Stanley, finish what you were telling me."

Charles Stanley did his best to comply, though the incident he was relating came to rather a summary ending. Still, after all, it was not ungratifying to find the celebrated Miss Brentham giving him such interested attention. The rest of the evening passed pleasantly, other friends were introduced to him, but Charles Stanley did not again find himself in close proximity to Miss Brentham's cousin. But the cousin could be nothing to him, and of Miss Brentham's society he had quite his share. Looking back afterwards, he flattered himself Miss Brentham had figured prominently as his companion during the events of the evening. Just as he was preparing to leave, he met Mrs. Robinson at the door, and stayed to bid her good-night.

"Oh, Mr. Stanley, you are not going? and I have hardly spoken to you. I have been wanting to have a talk with you, but you must come one evening when we are alone, then we can have a quiet hour's chat by ourselves. I want to hear all you have been doing since you have been away."

While Mrs. Robinson was thus speaking, she had accompanied Charles Stanley a few steps down the hall. At the open door a carriage was standing ready to drive away. Just as he was thanking Mrs. Robinson for her kind interest in him, and for the evening's enjoyment, the face of Miss Brentham appeared at the carriage door. A moment later another person looked out, and Charles Stanley recognised the face that once before that evening had strangely interested him. Turning abruptly to Mrs. Robinson, he asked,

"Who is that lady with Miss Brentham?"

"That lady with Miss Brentham? Oh, a cousin of hers."

"They are not much alike."

"No, and their circumstances are as dissimilar as their appearance."

Charles Stanley looked inquiringly. Happily for the information he desired, Mrs. Robinson was of a very garrulous disposition. Reticence was a thing unknown to her. She had no secrets herself, and treated the affairs of her friends and acquaintances in the same open-handed fashion. So, in answer to Charles Stanley's inquiring glance, she replied readily, "She is a very nice girl, but placed in quite a different position from her cousin. Her mother is a widow, and their means straitened. Still, Miss Brentham is very kind to her, I believe, and there are always these little inequalities in families, Mr. Stanley, are there not?"

Mechanically Charles Stanley answered in the affirmative. As he pursued his way home that evening, he thought over what he had just heard. A widowed mother—straitened means—and these falling to the lot of one who looked so little formed for life's rough paths. He thought he understood the gentle, almost pensive expression of face; and Miss Brentham so strong, and with a reserve of power so fitted for endurance. Things and people didn't seem quite in their right places to Charles Stanley; but then, these were the little inequalities which Mrs. Robinson said were to be found in all families—in all life, it seemed to Charles Stanley. As he went slowly home that night, life appeared to him very unequal indeed. It was the narrow human view. Charles Stanley had not the faith which looks above this and beyond.

(*Continued on page* 113.)

"IFS" IN THE KITCHEN.

If it were my fortune to be both mother and housekeeper, I should strenuously insist on having every modern utensil that would really lighten my work. Strength is too precious, and life too short, to be wasted for the sake of adding a few more acres to the farm or of increasing an already comfortable bank account.

If doing this necessitated my having a very plain and commonplace parlour, I should flatter myself that I was showing a very commendable degree of common sense.

If I had an old, half worn-out cooking-range, my first care would be to get a new one. It would save half its cost in fuel the first year, not to mention the saving of time, patience and strength.

If the average woman were a little more self-assertive in regard to kitchen conveniences, there would not only be more justice shown, but she would increase her own self-respect, and add several years to her life.

If every kitchen were supplied with an easy rocking-chair and a high chair or stool, and the busy housewife would strive to see how many kinds of work she could do as well or far easier by using them, instead of foolishly making a martyr of herself and standing until tired nature can endure it no longer, she would be showing more wisdom than she sometimes does.

If an entertaining paper or magazine lies where it is convenient to be read in the few spare minutes which occasionally come to the hardest worker, an outlook will be had that will take her out of the rut of her own petty, carking cares, and give her an interest in the world's work that will wonderfully lighten her load.

If you are not strong, it is worse than folly to have your own or your children's clothes elaborately trimmed and then stand over the ironing board till completely exhausted, ironing them beautifully on each side.

If soft wood and unpainted floors are mopped with a small quantity of very hot water and thoroughly wiped, they will be far whiter than if soaked and vigorously scrubbed.

If a cake of sapolio or a dish of coal ashes which have been sifted through a wire sieve are always kept in a convenient place in the kitchen, the labour-saving uses they can be put to are almost numberless.

If dish towels are thoroughly washed with soap every morning and dried in the sun, they need never swell the already large weekly wash.

If you would be wise, study to do the most essential things, and to see how many you are in the habit of doing which are of no real benefit to any one.

"Shall I tell you how your dream may come true?"

HOW LOTTIE'S DREAM CAME TRUE.

"Be good, sweet child, and let who will be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them all day long,
And so make life, death, and the vast for ever,
One grand, sweet song." *Kingsley.*

"TALK to me, sister; you are for ever playing on that piano!"

"Does not my playing talk to you sometimes? I am sure I try to say in it all sorts of things."

"How?"

"Oh, I cannot tell you exactly; but when I feel very sad myself, or when I see you are looking sad, Lottie dear, I try to rise gradually in the music, which, somehow, creeps out of this dear old instrument under my fingers, to strains which tell of hope and comfort, and of that sweet, celestial glory into which we believe our dear one has departed."

"Yes, I know you do. Dull as I am about music, I can feel and hear what you say sometimes. How beautifully you play and sing, Annie, and how beautifully our mother

played and sang. It seems very hard that I can never do anything like that."

"Oh, Lottie, that is only a small matter; the truest, sweetest, holiest music is the music of a life."

"What kind? How? I don't understand!"

"Mother's singing and playing were but one expression of her lovely, holy life. Did you ever think, Lottie, that we never read of our Saviour playing or singing—except once, after His last supper, we read, 'and when they had sung a hymn'—yet if ever a life was full of the most solemn, sacred music, it was His. And so our mother's works of love were but the notes of the grand, sweet psalm of a life which was becoming more and more like the Master's. *Action* was with her the expression of that longing, trusting love which, looking ever to Him for guidance, caused her, while still upon earth, to be changing continually to a nearer and nearer likeness to the Saviour she adored. That makes me so sure now that she is with Him, because she became so like Him, so unselfish, so heavenly-minded, and so pure, and we know that 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' She could not be happy anywhere but where He is."

Lottie's eyes were suffused with tears. The two girls had only recently lost their mother, and their hearts were still full of sorrow for the gentle, holy creature who had passed away from them through the valley of the shadow of death.

"Play to me now a little," whispered the younger sister, "while I rest and think of her."

So the other played softly and with deep feeling the sweet, pure, holy thoughts inspired by the memory of one who was one of "the lights of the world," and of "the salt of the earth."

Sinking upon the couch and closing her eyes, Lottie mused and dreamed of a woman's noblest work, of a life spent for others, of self-devotion high and pure, of a frail, weak woman doing "what she could" for Him her soul loved, and of a sweet, calm, holy life, resting under the shadow of the Almighty, safe there and safe for ever.

At last the music ceased, and as the last echoes of a glad, triumphant burst of melody died away, Lottie rose and, coming across the room, threw herself upon a footstool at her sister's feet.

"Oh, Annie," she said, "I have been dreaming such a beautiful dream."

"What was it?"

"It was a vision of such a noble, pure and holy life as I think few women could attain to. Sister, I don't care for the paltry aims and interests which occupy the time without filling the lives of most girls; I crave for a higher, fuller life, such a life as our mother lived, near to Him the very thought of whom raises and ennobles the longing soul. I want to be like Him who spake as never man spake, and lived as never man lived, and suffered as never man suffered. And I dreamt just now, while you were playing, that I was all I longed to be. Oh, it was beautiful!" And the girl drew a long breath which spoke volumes.

"Shall I tell you how your dream may come true?"

"Yes. How?"

"You dreamt of noble things; go and do them, and you will become noble. You dreamt of a higher, fuller life; go and live it, and your life will be as high and full as you could wish. You dreamt you were like Him; do as He did, act as He acted, and you will become like Him. You dreamt you were all you longed to be; go and be all you dreamt you were, and your dream will come true."

"Impossible!"

"It will indeed. Yours will be a true and beautiful life; everything you dreamt it was; a grand, sweet song."

"But how am I to begin?"

"As you must end—by looking to Jesus. Don't look at others. It has been said that the most holy life down here is but a caricature of His; look at Him. Consider how He stooped from the glory on high to be first a babe, then a child in a carpenter's poor dwelling, and then One so poor that He had not where to lay His head. He began with little things; you must begin with little things, too."

"I will, sister."

There was a slight pause. The scent of mignonette and sweet peas was wafted in through the open window.

Lottie rose.

"I will begin with a very little thing," she said; "I am so very young, scarcely eighteen, and I cannot talk and do such things as you, but I will just take a few flowers to a poor sick girl in the village."

So she went out to meet her fate. For when she gave the flowers—a great bunch of pure white asters encircled in sweet mignonette—the sick girl clutched them eagerly, crying, "Oh, Heaven, Heaven!"

"Would you like me to read about Heaven?"

The words slipped out almost involuntarily, and the next moment Lottie found herself very much regretting that she had uttered them. For she was afraid to read the Bible to any one, she felt shy of speaking about her Saviour, she had never essayed to bear the cross of Christ and follow after Him so openly before.

But a look of intense longing came into the sick girl's face.

"Oh, miss, if you only would!" she whispered. "It's what I want to hear more than anything, except how I can get there."

So Lottie read of the great multitude whom no man could number, who stood before the Throne, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands, praising the Father and the Son.

"Ah, how beautiful!" said the sick girl. "Would that I could ever stand there!"

And before she know how it was, her visitor found herself trying to explain simply and plainly all she knew of the Gospel of our salvation. She told how that great crowd of which she had been reading had all washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and how the efficacy of that blood is the same now as it was then; and how, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; and how He was bruised for our iniquities, and with His stripes we are healed.

Again and again she went to the cottage, and the dying girl leaned upon her until she, too, learnt to trust that saving, cleansing, redeeming blood; and as she went down into the shadow of death she whispered a blessing on the young lady who had been such a true friend to her, and a prayer that she might help others as she had helped her.

And another girl, who had ministered to the temporal wants of the poor invalid, came and kissed Lottie, upon which she found courage to ask, "Can you, too, believe that your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake, and are you trying to live for Him?"

"I think I can *now*, and I think I will *now*," said the girl, "thanks to you."

Lottie felt very glad and very humble.

"If you please, miss, will you come and talk to my husband? he is very ill, and I fear sometimes he won't get over it," said another poor neighbour.

"And I, too, should like to have a visit from the young lady who was such a comfort to poor Mary," sighed an unhappy invalid.

And so on and on, till from that small beginning sprang gradually a life full of work, a life which had to be lived very near to the Master, constantly looking to Him—for the sense of responsibility was very great, and the needs of Lottie's poor friends were numerous and pressing—a life of holiness, a life set apart, a life higher than most lives, a life safe under the shadow of the Almighty, a life hid with Christ in God. And, sometimes, Annie looks at her and thinks, "How our Lottie's dream has come true—her life is indeed 'one grand, sweet song.'"

But if you asked the other, she would say that she does not think that, for she has continually more and more lofty dreams of what a Christian ought to be, and the more she does His will the more she knows of the doctrine; while ever before her mental gaze is the simple yet sublime word of the Master, who set no lower standard than the apparently far off and unattainable, but ever to be aimed at, "Be ye also perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And she would say that if one dream has been fulfilled, surely we may hope that, if we persevere, all our highest dreams may likewise come true, if not on earth, yet in the heaven above, where we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

EDITH C. KENYON.

"HAST THOU FAITH?"

IT is well known that much of the time of "meeting" amongst the Society of Friends is given over to silent meditation and communion. In absolutely unbroken silence, each member of the congregation communes with his own heart and with his God. In reply to a somewhat bantering remark upon this peculiar, though very commendable, custom, a Quaker is said to have remarked, "Friend, it would do thee good to have a little quiet talk *with thyself* sometimes."

The sound common sense contained in this reply needs not to be pointed out. It is self-evident. We should all of us be the better for an occasional quiet talk with ourselves. Can we not manage this if we try? "Where there's a will there's a way" is true of most things. If there is the will, surely we might find the way for some brief daily season of self-communion. And as a subject of thought for the first *quiet* time we are able to snatch from the busy, noisy turmoil of our lives, what could we have more profitable than the question which heads this paper?

Of a truth it is a question which demands much earnest heart-searching, and happy indeed are they who, after diligent inquiry of their own selves, can answer our question in the affirmative with absolute truthfulness.

Faith is a matter for individual decision. It is a subject which every individual being must settle for himself or herself. It is not a question which can be dealt with by proxy. It must be answered by each one of us personally.

It is worthy of note that while in our universal prayer we are taught to address God as *Our* Father, in our creed there is no plurality. From beginning to end it is "*I*," not "*our*"; "*I* believe," not "*we* believe"; pointing to the fact that while our prayers may be common to us all, our belief cannot be so. Our faith, or creed—call it what you will—must be in very truth our *belief*—an epitome of the things in which we individually, each one of us, have faith.

And it is not enough to have a mere form of words which we have learnt by heart, and which, from long familiarity, we are prone to gabble over with scarcely a thought as to the awful meaning and significance of what we are saying. Faith is no matter of form. A parrot might be taught a *creed*, but no one could by any stretch of imagination suppose the words the parrot uttered to be its *belief*. In this matter of faith methinks there are a good many parrots amongst us. It is nothing short of a deadly insult to our Maker to profess faith in Him unless we really possess it.

How many there are who transgress the third commandment every time they enumerate the articles of what they are pleased to call their creed! How many—alas that it should be so!—who, should this question, "Hast thou faith?" be put to them, would be compelled to answer "No." And yet they have their creed! What a sham! What a base, hollow mockery!

Says St. Paul, in this 13th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." His words are worth much careful study. We may allow that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; but if we have not faith in the fact which we allow, our lack of faith condemns us.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—"*Whatsoever!*" Since, then, this matter of faith affects us all so vitally, let us see to it that our faith is something more than a name or a mere lifeless creed. Let us make it a real, blessed thing, leavening and purifying our whole lives. It is no use merely to *think* we have faith. We must be quite sure that we have got it. And how can we be sure that we have got it? Simply by the happy feeling of restful security and freedom from alarm that true faith in Christ alone can give.

Faith is an inestimable blessing, as well as an absolute necessity for our salvation. Does any earnest seeker after the truth as it is in Christ Jesus ask, "How may I obtain this faith?" I would answer, from God's own hand alone. He alone can implant a firm belief and faith in what He has promised, and He will implant it in every soul that humbly and prayerfully seeks it.

It is so easy—so very easy to trust God and have faith in Him. We can put our confidence in frail humanity that in our hour of need deserts us. Why cannot we trust God, who has promised *never* to leave us nor forsake us? Though faithless to Him, He has always been faithful to us—loving, guiding, guarding, helping us as no human friend could.

Again I say, then, why cannot we trust Him who has done so much for us? We are forced to admit that our earthly, mortal life is only retained at His pleasure—"when He taketh our breath away we die." Our eternal destiny is equally in His keeping. Can we not believe this, and with true faith cast ourselves, body, soul and spirit, on His love and mercy?

Oh, let us begin from this hour and say from our hearts, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." He will help us if we will but ask Him. I repeat it is, or ought to be, an easy thing to trust the God who has, our whole lives through, loved us with "an everlasting love"—a love that passeth knowledge.

There is no excuse for lack of faith in God. Then, my sister, "*Hast* THOU *faith?*" If not, why not? D.

JULY is the month for thin dresses, shady hats, and no mantles to speak of. Elderly women, however, cannot go entirely without mantles, though in all probability they feel the heat even more than the young. The best material for making these is black lace or net; that is to say, a net shape, trimmed or overlaid with lace; and in doing this the scallop of the upper row must always overlap the foot of the lower. The lightest and neatest way of finishing off the top row or frill is to have some moderate sized black beads handy, and stitch on one at a time, at intervals of rather less than half an inch. This is particularly nice when there is a beading of quilled narrow lace put as a finish, and the beads come between that and the final row of wider lace. Some of the nicest hot weather mantles are netted with coarse black purse silk in about two-inch bands of small netting divided by rows made with a large mesh. If the art of netting has not died out, many ladies can thus make themselves comfortable scarf-like mantles in the few afternoon or evening hours they can give to a quiet occupation that is restful and useful. Such mantles are often bought, and are rather expensive, but they are made with many beads strung on the silk before netting, and are ruination to the backs of chairs.

Black lace, chip, and transparent crinoline braid form the staple of elderly ladies' bonnets and hats; none of them are expensive, and all are light in weight, a very important point for people who are getting into years and feel oppressed and overburdened, and headachy if they have any heavy thing of the kind to wear.

Public taste is certainly tending in the direction of simplicity. One of the newest dresses of the season is made of a very thin kind of alpaca or crêpe cloth in wide width, so that the selvedge comes at the top and bottom of the skirt, and the only seam is behind, where it is lost to sight among the four or five folds that compose all the fulness. The way to arrange a skirt of this kind is to get the individual for whom it is intended to stand, and have the centre of the piece of cloth pinned to her waist in front and stretch it round. The fulness behind cannot be made to come up to the waist, but the back of the bodice is made with rather a long point and the back of the skirt hooks on to it, two folds being arranged on either side the placket hole with a hook on the end of each. This gives the skirt just a little extra length behind, which is very easily caught up in the hand for walking. Round the bottom of this kind of dress a few rows of velvet look very nice, but cannot be considered necessary, at all events while the dress is fresh. The bodice has the ordinary lining very neatly made and with a small point in front usually covered by a waistband stitched up V shape in the middle, and which goes considerably lower than the real waist. The material of the dress is cut in one piece for the back and another for the front; it covers the lining simply by means of careful stretching, the only seams being one under each arm, and under the left arm the bodice fastens. This is really the new style of frock for the present year, and it will probably become very popular. The sleeves are almost coat sleeves, but a little looser, and are not set in high on the shoulders.

Very nice long cloaks of fine checked cloth are being worn by young people as coveralls. The material is not probably all wool, and costs about 3s. 6d. a yard, four yards being sufficient for a cloak which is fulled into a small pointed yoke. They are none too warm for a summer evening over a thin frock, and are also very valuable in autumn and spring.

Muslins of the soft kind that can be got up with little or no starch are most useful and graceful, and they cost very little. Our illustration gives the idea of one that is easily made with the muslin fulled up to the neck and sleeves gathered at the wrist. Printed muslins look very nice, and so do white ones, but the printed patterns must be small and of the all-over kind. The matching of stripes and large patterns is a branch of the dressmaking business by itself, and requires a considerable amount of study, besides necessitating an extra quantity of stuff.

Some very nice new stockings are being made and have been patented (by Vincent, Bailey, and Co.). They are called the shapely knee stockings, and are great benefits in summer, because for most people they obviate the necessity of wearing garters. We all know how a stocking is curved outwards from the ankle to allow for the calf of the leg, and these are curved inwards again above the calf and outwards to make room for the knee. This enables them to keep in place for indoor wear and does away with the need even for suspenders. They are not more expensive than any other kind of cotton or Lisle thread stockings, and the black ones are of perfectly fast and innocent dye.

One-button kid gloves are worn again, and, of course, sleeves are longer than they have been for years. The silk gloves of this season are very pretty and moderate in price, and many are made with double finger tips. Extremely good ones are to be had for 1s. 11d.

The pattern of a simple mantle for making up in black lace or net may be had by enclosing 8½d. in stamps to M. L., at the office of THE MOTHERS' COMPANION.

Patterns will be sent as soon as possible, but must not be expected by return of post.